

WATSON

FILE OF WIGHT LIBRARY
SMITHFIELD BRANCH

Hugh Watson, former Daily Press columnist

By Jennifer Phillips
Daily Press

HAMPTON

Hugh Smith Watson Jr., former columnist for the Daily Press, died Monday. He was 89.

Mr. Watson's weekly genealogy column, "Climbing the Family Tree," appeared in the Daily Press for more than 30 years until he relinquished it 10 years ago.

Many considered his insight a valuable source of information about the families of Colonial Virginia. "He was very proud of his heritage and interested in history," said his goddaughter, Mary Curry.

The Virginia Mayflower Society recognized Mr. Watson's contributions in 1987 with an award recognizing his contributions. The award noted his discoveries and dedication resulted in establishment of the society as a branch of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants in 1952.

Mr. Watson — who became interested in genealogy in 1927 — was a member of the First Families of Virginia, the Sons of the American Revolution and the Hugh S. Watson Jr. Chapter of the Tidewater Genealogical Society.

He was also known for his humor and knack for conversation. "He was a gentleman who would never leave his lady friends without an escort," said Curry. She said he enjoyed the company of his female friends and would never let them attend a function unattended.



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A native and lifelong resident of the Peninsula, he was the son of Hugh Smith Watson Sr. and Sarra Florence West Watson. He had retired from NASA in 1979 as a purchasing agent after 35 years of civil service.

Mr. Watson is survived by his sister, Eleanor Watson Holden of Charlottesville; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, at St. John's Episcopal Church by the Rev. Rodney L. Caulkins. Interment will be held on Thursday at 1 p.m. in Blandford Cemetery, Petersburg.

Expressions of sympathy may be made to the American Heart Association, 753 Thimble Shoals Blvd., Suite 2B, Newport News, Va. 23606. Arrangements by R. Hayden Smith Funeral Home